

Homoeopathic Remedy COCCULUS INDICUS - Indian Cockle

With Some Case Histories

By Joy Lucas

HISTORY

Used by Arabian physicians but it was chiefly employed as a stupefying poison for fish, making them easy to catch. Its main medicinal use was for an external ointment for scabies and ringworm - they paralyse and stop the mites?

The plant has also been used in the illicit adulteration of beer increasing the inebriating quality and strength of the beer and preventing a second fermentation which would cause the barrels to burst. It was also an ingredient used by thieves for the purpose of hocussing their victims!!

It is a strong climbing plant and the fruit is the size of a pea.

The active substance is Picrotoxine (Picrotoxic acid). The shell is emetic and it is the kernal which contains the Picrotoxic acid.

The symptoms of poisoning are trembling gait, protruding eyes, agitation of the muscles followed by convulsions and contortions of the whole body, falling backwards and forwards, entire loss of consciousness, foaming at the mouth, nausea and vomiting, tongue and gums livid, respiration laboured or quickened. Symptoms remit and then return with even greater violence.

It exerts its influence similar to that of Camphor, more particularly on the brain. In fact Camphor is the main antidote.

Hahnemann was the first to use this substance internally.

HOMEOPATHIC ESSENCE

Again the theme of paralysis but from suppression or being stopped in some way. The connection between themselves and the cause of their illness has been broken. The stem has been broken and they are separated from the roots. They have lost sight of their own sense of being. But in contrast to this they develop extreme sympathy to the sufferings of others. In a way they are denying themselves, they have stupefied their own feelings but can still sense the intense feelings of others. They over absorb but with a sense of emptiness.

The sensitivity to others is so intense that they will go to great lengths in helping or relieving the suffering. They will go without sleep and food and although this will have its consequences, they still persevere. Just as it is a strong climbing plant the person will climb and climb great heights (figuratively speaking) to help others whilst running away from their own roots. Hence the rubric 'recognises everything but cannot move.'

Interestingly it can effect just one half of the body, leaving the other half untouched. So they have only half the sense of

themselves. And Clarke describes a characteristic symptom as an 'opening and shutting' sensation (akin to the remission and relapse common to MS?)

Of course no-one can keep this state going for long. The consequence is extreme tiredness, dullness, staggering, very imbalanced gait. Staggering around trying to make the connections.

Why and how do they get like this? Trauma or long standing, chronic situations are usually the cause. A sudden illness in the family, someone who needs constant care - a catastrophic incident in the community - a long standing sad situation where they cannot express their own feelings.

They can be very romantic (absorbed in reveries) but are very easily offended, (sadness, as if from an insult) so a loving relationship is very easily broken. They will dwell on this chronically and suppress their feelings until a diseased state begins to appear. So sensitive, there will be profound sadness (horrible stories and sad things affect her profoundly). This is where the hocusing aspect comes in.

They are so vulnerable, so giving, so easily led, so easily stupefied.

In chronic states I would see this as a more gradual process but of course the client can present at any stage but if it is the extreme, final stages you might well have someone who just sits there staring, doing nothing, hardly moving.

COCCULUS INDICUS – a case.

Case taken 24/9/01

Female, 49y, lab researcher, married, 3 children

PC – constant fear, anxiety, total introversion, feelings of stiffness.

Observations:- average height, slightly plump, dark hair, slightly perspiring but clear skin, seems an intelligent and caring person. She did not weep during the case taking, but was reasonably open.

"How can I help you?"

"Ever since it happened I can't do anything – I can't work, concentrate, get going on anything, I feel so stiff emotionally as well as physically. I am so scared, everything seems dangerous to me. I am sure everyone feels strongly about it all but I can't understand why it is effecting me so deeply. I feel completely consumed with anger, sadness, anxiousness and fear."

The following is a more condensed re-telling of the case.

By "it" she is referring to September 11th events in the USA

Watched CNN continuously for over a week

Was totally absorbed into it

Couldn't believe that a whole week had passed by and she had done nothing else

Couldn't sleep

Was at home on her own – husband and children away from

home

Had no contact with anyone else

Described herself as quiet but confident normally

Likes her job – it is interesting but not too taxing

Enjoys a good discussion with friends

Likes politics, reading, cinema, music – very cultured

Relationship with family very good – children away at

University, husband travels a lot – misses them, can get

lonely but has lots of friends

Not religious

Worn out now with loss of sleep

Mind feels confused, can't concentrate

The attacks of fear and anxiety come on suddenly, doesn't

want to go out of the house, jumps when the phone rings,

nearly didn't turn up for her appointment

Main fear is of danger – "everything hides something

dangerous"

Before all this was only frightened of spiders

Whole body feels stiff and tired – no pain though

<<< a.m. mainly because of loss of sleep (usually quite a

good sleeper).

Feels now as though she has a cold coming on – slightly sore

throat r. side

No appetite, hadn't eaten properly for days, quite thirsty for

cold water

--- fish, apples, doesn't like meat but eats it for convenience

of family cooking

+++ pasta, cheese

Feels bloated and full of wind

Stools and urine o.k.

Menses rather erratic for last few months – thinks it's the

menopause – nothing untoward

Very poor sleep, no dreams, mind feels too numb

Likes air but feels uncomfortable if she gets chilly

Generally << morning

Usually very good health, can't remember the last time she

was ill, can't carry on like this.

Children's health good. Parents still alive and well.

So here was a person of usually good health, a strong

constitution who had nonetheless been knocked sideways by

a traumatic event.

She felt she had no idea why this trauma had effected her so

much.

Repertorisation – Synthetic.

Fear impending danger

Absorbed in thought

Averse to food

Stiffness – extremities

These aspects of the case were so strong that I was prepared

to use only these.

I felt I was treating this case as an acute as the client showed no other tendency towards this state.

It was hard to see a constitutional state (i.e. Rx) as she was normally so healthy.

Coincidentally I chose to read up on Cocculus Indicus first, not only because it appeared bold type in all the above rubrics but because the only thing I could remember about this remedy was that it was used to paralyse fish!!!! And I was taken by her aversion to fish – it was a very strong aversion

It is always strange but very useful when something just happens to steer you in the right direction.

And it saved a lot of time.

M. Tyler quotes.... "Glamis hath murdered sleep and therefore Cawdor shall sleep no more; Macbeth shall sleep no more.

And she also writes..... Thoughts are fixed on a single disagreeable subject; absorbed in thought and notices nothing; time passes quickly; easily startled; ill effects of anger and grief; extreme aversion to food; paralytic weakness.

Speech difficult, can't read or think, takes a long time in reflecting.

Slowness of comprehension, cannot find the right word, speaks hastily, forgets himself, irritable and cannot bear the

least noise or contradiction.

Great talkativeness, witty joking, irresistible desire to sing, a kind of mania. Melancholy and sad, sensitive to insults.

Cannot accomplish anything at work.

Frightened and very anxious for others.

Fear of death and unknown dangers.

Cocculus indicus (Indian Cockle) – active principle is

Picrotoxin (alkaloid) = used for stupefying fish so that they might be caught by hand.

Remedy = Cocculus 200 – single dose

She phoned 2 days later to say that she went to bed straight away and fell asleep but had the most awful dreams of being crushed.

She was surprised that she awoke without any fear even though the dream was still with her.

She ate 3 breakfasts the next day and laughed about this.

She has been crying a lot but feels >>> for this.

Feels the remedy is still working and asked what else it will do.

Wait and see I said.

So why did this relatively healthy, strong and seemingly harmonious person 'fall' so deeply?

She is a sensitive person and perhaps that is where her susceptibility lies.

I think that many of us tend to group together a small

number of remedies and label them as useful for trauma and shock etc. But we must stress the individuality of every case and with this in mind one could almost say that ANY remedy could be the similimum in a trauma/shock case.